



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OCT 28 2015

OFFICE OF  
ADMINISTRATION  
AND RESOURCES  
MANAGEMENT

The Honorable John Boozman  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Boozman:

Thank you for your letter of September 18, 2015, to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requesting information on the EPA's hiring effort. The Administrator has asked that I respond to your inquiry. We share your interest in ensuring that any agency new hires are qualified to do the jobs for which they are being hired and are essential to carrying out the EPA's core mission. All hiring being conducted is within the staffing target set by the Office of Management and Budget's FY 2016 guidance.

All new hires were recruited following federal recruitment and hiring regulations and practices and vetted using personnel security procedures. The agency understands union concerns regarding our current hiring effort, but I believe ongoing training, development, and promotion opportunities that support our current, valued workforce address their concerns. In addition, on July 20, 2015, Administrator McCarthy responded to several concerns raised by the American Federation of Government Employees' (AFGE) Council 238 in a letter she wrote to Karen Kellen, President of AFGE Council 238. This letter is enclosed with my response.

Since 2014, the EPA has offered three different rounds of Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA or early outs) and Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments (VSIP or buyouts). The first round was completed in April 2014 resulting in 456 departures; round two resulted in 196 departures in January 2015; and round three conducted by our Region 10 office in Seattle, Washington, resulted in 30 departures in April 2015. The VERA/VSIP departures by program and regional office since October 2014 are summarized in enclosure.

Since my May 15, 2015 memorandum outlining the objectives and methods of our hiring effort, the EPA has used a number of vehicles to advertise and recruit for vacant positions. USA Jobs announcements were used to advertise for 566 positions. The agency used flyers and in-person recruitment and outreach activities to share vacancies with non-competitive eligible candidates including veterans, disabled veterans and Peace Corps volunteers. Like all federal agencies, the EPA has ongoing recruitment and outreach activities that occur throughout the year. Agency recruitment activities are outlined in enclosure, since May 15, 2015. The EPA also maintains a list of diverse professional societies, technical organizations, colleges, and universities that offices are encouraged to use in their outreach and recruitment efforts.

About 47 specialized staff in the EPA's three Human Resources Shared Service Centers, located in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, Cincinnati, Ohio and Las Vegas, Nevada are primarily responsible for managing all agency hiring including the current effort. They are assisted by staff in the regional and program offices, who devoted time to developing job announcements, reviewing applications, conducting interviews, checking references prior to selection, and initiating personnel security clearance requests. These activities are required for any agency new hire. From May 15, 2015 through September 28, 2015, the EPA had 396 new hires. This is in addition to the 373 new hires prior to May 15, 2015 and 451 internal actions that provided for promotions, details or new opportunities to our current employees.

Since 2013, the agency has instituted a number of internal management controls, including those related to the agency's hiring process. During the VERA/VSIP process, each office was required to certify that any new hire related to a vacated position had been properly restructured. Offices documented whether the position had 1) changed from supervisory to non-supervisory, 2) changed series, 3) changed grade or lowered the full performance level, or 4) had the same series, grade or full performance level but substantively different duties. Any new duties were verified by the respective Human Resources Shared Service Center. This analysis and verification were used by regional and program offices in the agency's recent hiring effort and will continue to be used for any future hiring resulting from a VERA/VSIP vacancy.

Agency offices must continue to follow their developed business cases that were approved by the Office of Personnel Management and the Office of Management and Budget when the EPA was granted VERA/VSIP authority. Those business cases laid out projected strategic hires following VERA/VSIP departures and continue to guide the agency's hiring efforts.

The agency has improved its internal controls over managing overtime; communicating its policy for requesting, approving and tracking overtime to supervisors and managers; and reinforcing it through reminders and guidance.

Again, thank you for your letter. If you have further questions, please contact me or your staff may contact Ms. Christina Moody in the EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations at [Moody.Christina@epa.gov](mailto:Moody.Christina@epa.gov) or (202) 564-0260.

Sincerely,

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Karl Brooks  
Acting Assistant Administrator

Enclosures



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OCT 28 2015

OFFICE OF  
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The Honorable Michael D. Crapo  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Crapo:

Thank you for your letter of September 18, 2015, to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requesting information on the EPA's hiring effort. The Administrator has asked that I respond to your inquiry. We share your interest in ensuring that any agency new hires are qualified to do the jobs for which they are being hired and are essential to carrying out the EPA's core mission. All hiring being conducted is within the staffing target set by the Office of Management and Budget's FY 2016 guidance.

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**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**  
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**OCT 28 2015**

OFFICE OF  
ADMINISTRATION  
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The Honorable M. Michael Rounds  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Superfund, Waste Management and Regulatory Affairs  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OCT 28 2015

OFFICE OF  
ADMINISTRATION  
AND RESOURCES  
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The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Madam Chairwoman:

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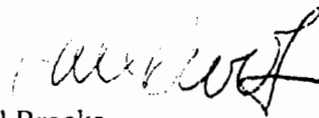
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OCT 28 2015

OFFICE OF  
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MANAGEMENT

The Honorable Daniel Sullivan  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Fisheries, Water, and Wildfire  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

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OFFICE OF  
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The Honorable James M. Inhofe  
Chairman  
Committee on the Environment and Public Works  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

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OFFICE OF  
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The Honorable David Vitter  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

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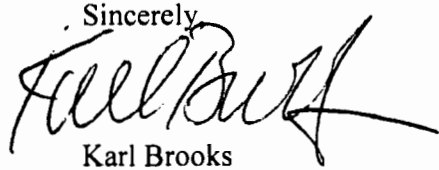
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# **EPA Early-out/buyouts since Oct. 1, 2014**

	Office of Air and Radiation	Office of Administration and Resrouces Management	Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention	Office of International and Tribal Affairs	Office of Research and Development	Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response	Office of Water	Region 2 - New York	Region 5 - Chicago	Region 10 - Seattle	Total
12/15/2014		1									1
12/18/2014	1										1
12/19/2014							1				1
12/22/2014							1				1
12/26/2014			1								1
12/27/2014		3	1		2			1			7
12/28/2014		1									1
12/30/2014	1						1				2
12/31/2014	1	5	12	2	6	7	5	4	9		51
1/1/2015		1									1
1/2/2015	4	13	7	7	1	10	9	3	5		59
1/3/2015		3	13		3	2	3	4			28
1/8/2015		1						1			2
1/9/2015	2	4	9	4	8	2	6	3	2		40
4/20/2015										1	1
4/24/2015										1	1
4/25/2015										1	1
4/28/2015										1	1
4/30/2015										26	26
<b>Office Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>226</b>

\*Data as of 9.22.2015

**EPA Recruitment and Outreach Calendar**  
**Activities from May – September 2015**  
(Similar events happen throughout each calendar year)

<b>Date of Event</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Audience</b>
5/2015	Hiring Heroes Military Spouse Event	Veteran Outreach
5/5/2015	Peace Corp Career Fair	Midwest Regional - RPCV
5/2015	Fort Meade Community Job Fair	Veteran Outreach
5/12/2015	CSU San Bernardino	All Majors
5/27/2015	CSU Northridge	Science, Technology, Engineer, Math (STEM)
6/14/2015	SAIGE Annual Training Conference	Diverse – Science, Technology, Engineer, math (STEM)
6/17/2015	AAPI Annual Conference	Diverse Outreach
7/7/2015	LULAC National Conference	Outreach
7/2015	Transition Readiness Hiring Event	Veteran Outreach
8/2015	Quantico Veteran Hiring Event	Veteran Outreach
8/28/2015	Ft. Belvoir Operation Warfighter Job Fair	Veteran Outreach
9/2015	Quantico Hiring Event for Transition Service Members	All Majors
9/2015	Matsunaga Elementary School – Environmental Science Session	Outreach
9/3/2015	Hiring our Heroes Job Fair	Veteran Outreach
9/4/2015	Quantico MCB Transitioning Service Members Job Fair	Veteran Outreach
9/15/2015	Illinois Institute of Technology Career Fair	All Majors
9/18/2015	Denver Indian Center Job Fair	Outreach
9/19/2015	Claflin University Fall Career Fair	All Majors
9/2015	Veterans & Transitioning Service Members Wounded Warrior/Operation War Fighter	All
9/18/2015	Spelman College	All Majors/Outreach
9/23/2015	Engineer and Science Job and Internships	Science, Technology, Engineer Math (STEM)
9/25/2015	William College Job and Internship Fair	Liberal Arts





THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

JUL 20 2015

Ms. Karen S. Kellen  
President  
American Federation of Government Employees  
Council 238  
1595 Wynkoop Street  
Denver, Colorado 80202

Dear Ms. Kellen:

*Karen*

I thank you for your letter about the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's plans to hire new staff so that we will have 15,000 full time staff on board when FY 2016 begins. Our robust efforts to achieve this absolutely crucial goal are complementing the many actions now underway in national program offices and regions to promote, train, and develop our career colleagues. I have said, many times in many places, that their professional work, every day, enables the EPA to carry out our mission.

Our career staff work really hard, every day, under demands that you know as well as I. If I can use my management prerogatives to get them the full complement of hands they need to do our work, then I will do so boldly, insistently and repeatedly. Supporting our staff should be every EPA leader's responsibility, and that's why I am keeping our focus on this effort to staff up.

Karl Brooks at the Office of Administration and Resources Management and a number of the Assistant Regional Administrators have detailed the many actions accomplished and underway that open mobility and opportunity doors for career staff. These actions are going on everywhere in this agency. And I am pleased to know that the unions' commitment to pre-decisional involvement means this agency should soon be able to offer a phased retirement option that many of our career colleagues will consider a real benefit. We are spending more right now on training and career development than at any time in the past three fiscal years, a sign of this agency's commitment to improving not just the EPA, but also our career staff's capabilities and opportunities.

Of course I appreciate the value of our current, dedicated career staff, but let me share some important points about our hiring goals. I am absolutely dedicated to making sure this agency has the workforce we need to meet the demands placed on us. Adding new staff is essential to keeping our agency on the forefront of environmental protection with skills that we know we need. This hiring objective reinforces my objective of making this agency the best place to work for everyone, career professionals and newcomers alike.

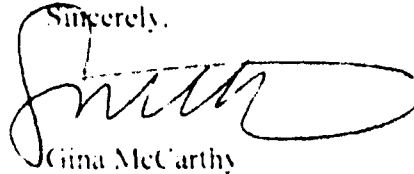
This agency has thoughtfully developed the objectives and methods to accomplish our hiring goal. The conversation Karl convened last month between union leaders and senior agency managers reflected our commitment to showing how our new hiring effort delivers on the detailed workforce planning that supported our targeted VERA/VSIP plans offered in FY 2014 and 2015. OARM's Shared Service Centers and Office of Human Resources have consulted closely with their program and regional customers to make the strategic new staff hires conform to the objectives specified in VERA/VSIP.

plans. Our current hiring effort uses well developed techniques that meet our workforce requirements and our important obligations to apply merit principles and promote diversity.

During the conference that OARM hosted last month, I know that managers and union representatives exchanged good ideas about how to support, train and develop career staff. Karl and his team are following up on some specific challenges the unions identified. If there are actions or practices that contradict this agency's commitment to the merit system and our collective bargaining agreements, we will address them. But I just do not see how hiring new people while continuing to make hundreds of merit promotions and offer the EPA's most robust training and development efforts in years will have the "devastating impact on current EPA staff" you fear. While certainly new staff will need training, most of the efforts underway across this agency target career professionals who either want to advance themselves or improve their skill sets.

At a time when this agency faces considerable challenges in maintaining the resources to do our work, it is in all our interests -- managers and unions alike -- to meet our commitments to our colleagues and to the American people whose health and security are our top priorities. Let's look for future opportunities to work together on this task.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gina McCarthy", with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

Gina McCarthy